

CORRECTIONS TO THE DRAWINGS

Corrected drawings are submitted herewith. The corrections are indicated in a marked-up copy of the drawings submitted herewith, and are incorporated into a clean copy of the corrected drawings submitted herewith.

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-5, 7, 9-11, 13-17, and 19 have been cancelled without prejudice to pursue them in a continuation application. Claims 12 and 18 have been amended to better define the invention claimed, and have also been placed in independent form. Claims 6 and 8 have been amended to depend from claim 12 and also to better define the invention claimed. New claims 20-23 have been added and depend from claim 12. New claims 24-35, which depend from claim 18, have also been added. Amendments have been made to the specification, and a substitute specification is submitted herewith. Corrected drawings are also submitted herewith.

The amendments to the claims, specification, and drawings are supported throughout the application as originally filed. For example, amended claim 12 and new claims 20-23 are supported in FIGS. 2C -2D and corresponding language in the specification, as well as other parts of the original application. Amended claim 18 and new claims 24-35 are supported in FIGS. 3A-3H and corresponding language in the specification, as well as other parts of the original application. The new paragraphs that form the bulk of the SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION are derived from the claims as originally filed.

No new material is added by this Amendment.

Objection to the Oath/Declaration

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that a new Oath/Declaration was required. Submitted herewith is a new Oath/Declaration.

Objection to the Drawings

The Drawings were objected to because reference characters "18" and "8" were both used to refer to cord elements (Figs. 5A), because the reference character "8" was used to designate both cords and cross reinforcement elements (Figs. 3J, 3K, 3L, 4B,

5A); and because reference numbers 8e and 8f from the figures are not mentioned in the description.

Submitted herewith are replacement/corrected drawings by which the issues with respect to characters “8” and “18” are believed addressed. Additionally, the amendments to the specification made herein have included proper reference to reference numbers 8e and 8f; have removed the reference to non-existent Figs. 1H; and have corrected the reference to Fig. “1D” with proper reference to Figs. “1D1” and “1D2”. Accordingly, the drawings are now believed to be in proper condition.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification as containing various misspellings and typographical errors, and as lacking a Brief Summary of the Invention. The Examiner also noted (in the Objection to the Drawings) that various reference numbers in the drawings were not included in the specification, and vice-versa. By this Amendment (and specifically the changes included in the attached Replacement Specification), the cited errors and non-compliance have been corrected. No new material is added by this Amendment and Replacement Specification.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 2-19 for various reasons, including improper language, combining device and method into a single claim, etc. By this Amendment the previous claims have either been cancelled without prejudice or put into compliance with USPTO regulations.

The §101 Rejection of Claim 14

The Examiner rejected claim 14 under §101. By this Amendment, claim 14 is cancelled without prejudice.

The §112 Rejection of Claims 1-19

The Examiner rejected claims 1-19 under §112. By this Amendment, the cited claims have either been cancelled without prejudice or put into compliance with §112.

The §102(b) Rejection of the Claims as Anticipated by Durant

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5, 7-9, 13, and 17-18 as anticipated by Durant. Claims 1-3, 5, 7, 9, 13, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice, and claims 8 and 18 as amended are now believed allowable over Durant.

Claim 8 has been amended so that it now depends from claim 12 (as amended), which was not rejected over the art of record. Claim 12 as amended is now believed to be allowable, and dependent claim 8 as amended is also believed to be allowable.

Claim 18 as amended recites that the aperture cincture element comprises a continuous loop of reinforcement that is bent, woven, or folded. (Applicant notes that the “continuous loop” language was in claim 18 in its original form, albeit in a different position in the text, but claim 18 has now been amended to clarify and better define the invention claimed.) While Durant discloses a wire bent to hold one element adjacent another element, the bent wire of Durant is not a continuous loop. Durant does not provide any teaching or suggestion of a continuous loop aperture cincture element or of other recited elements of claim 18 as amended.

The §103 Rejection of Claims

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 7 and 13 as being obvious over Durant in view of Artzer. By this Amendment, claims 7 and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice.

The Claims Not Rejected Over the Art of Record

In the Office Action, pending claims 6 and 12 were not rejected over the art of record. Claim 6 has been amended to depend from claim 12, and claim 12 itself has been amended to place it in independent form and to better clarify the invention claimed. Claims 6 and 12 as amended are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

The New Claims

New claims 20-23 depend from claim 12 as amended, while new claims 24-35 depend from claim 18 as amended. These new claims are believed to be allowable over the art of record.

CONCLUSION

Applicant is particularly appreciative of the Examiner's efforts in reviewing this application and preparing the Office Action, especially in view of the general nature of the particular application and technology.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Hence an indication of allowability is hereby requested.

If for any reason direct communication with Applicants' attorney would serve to advance prosecution of this case to finality, the Examiner is cordially urged to call the undersigned attorney at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 30, 2007



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*Corrected Drawings
(w/ Markaps)*

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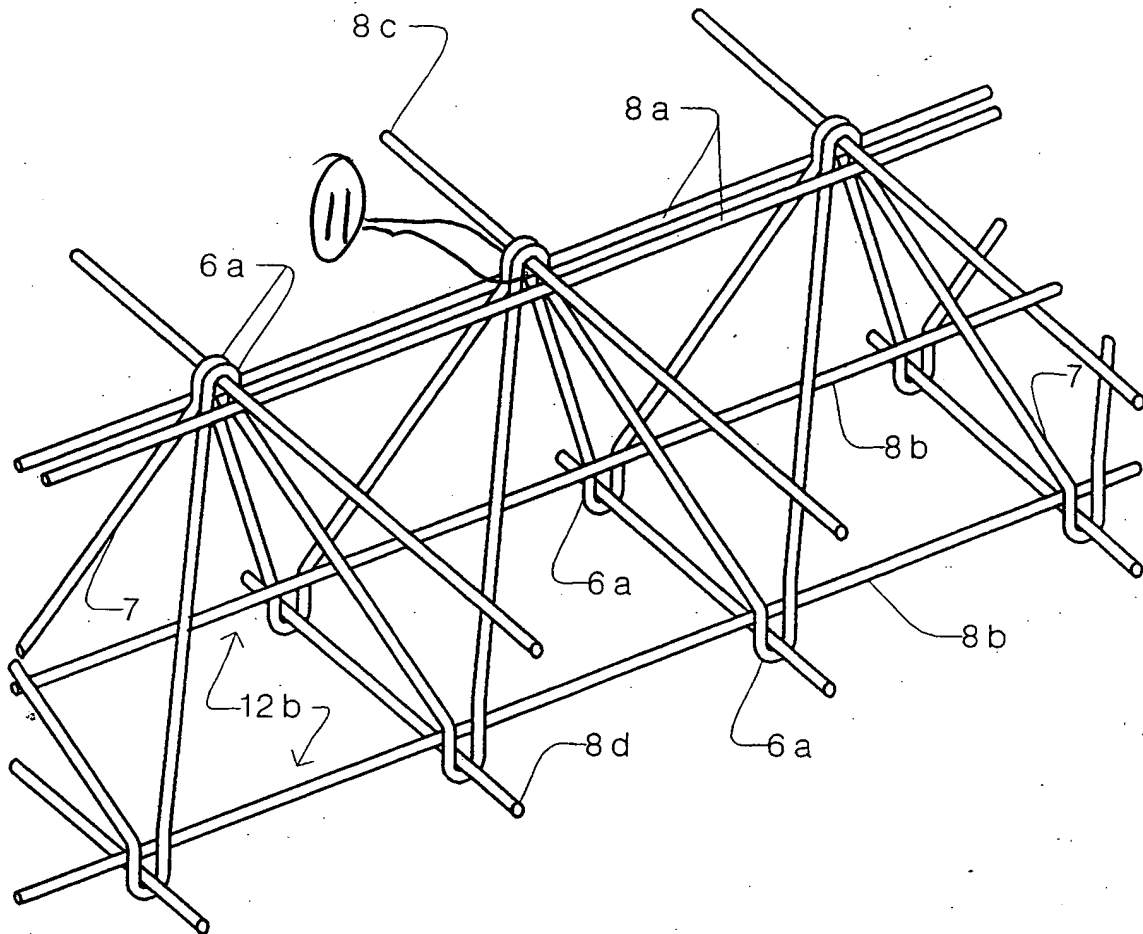
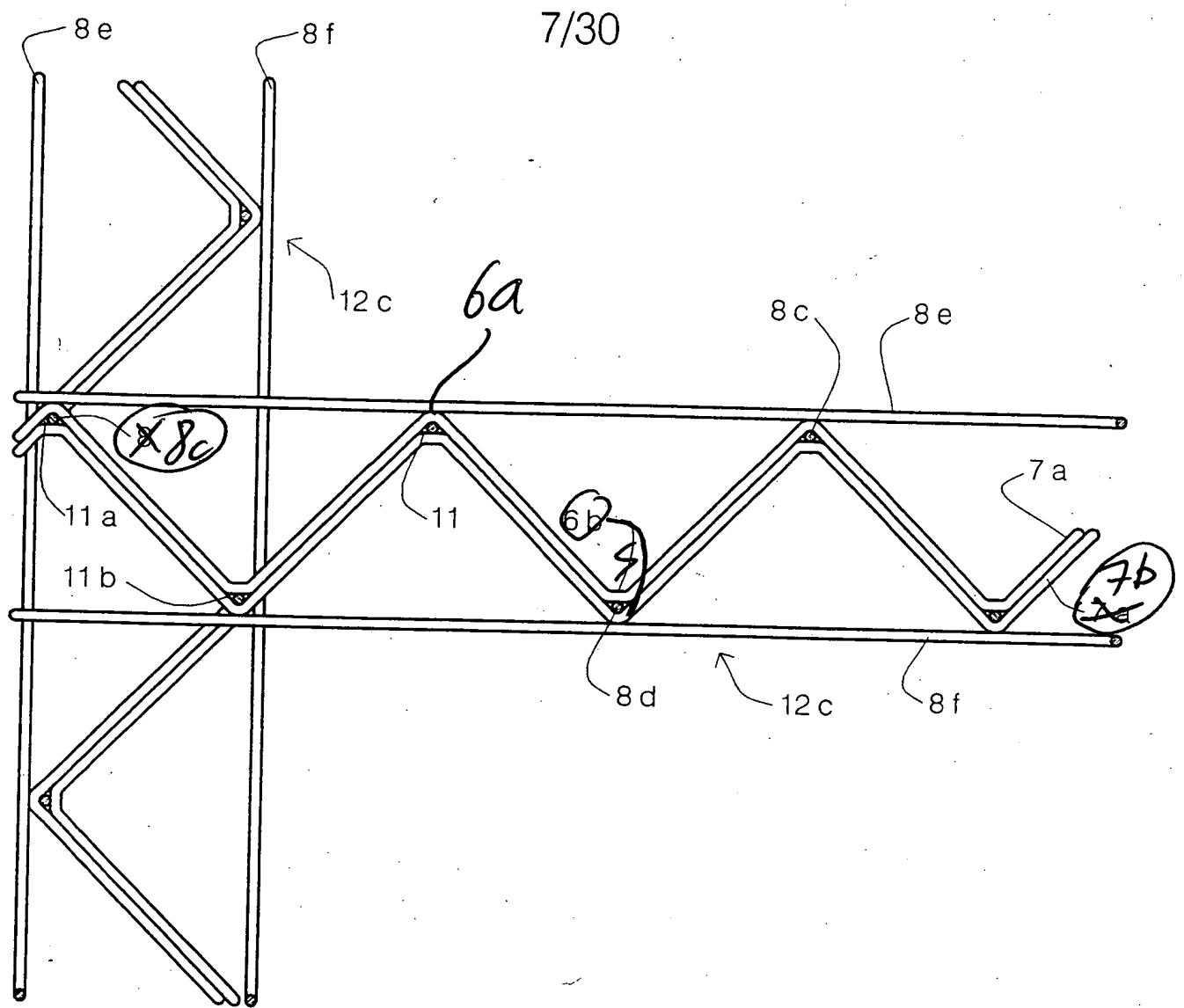


Fig. 1D2



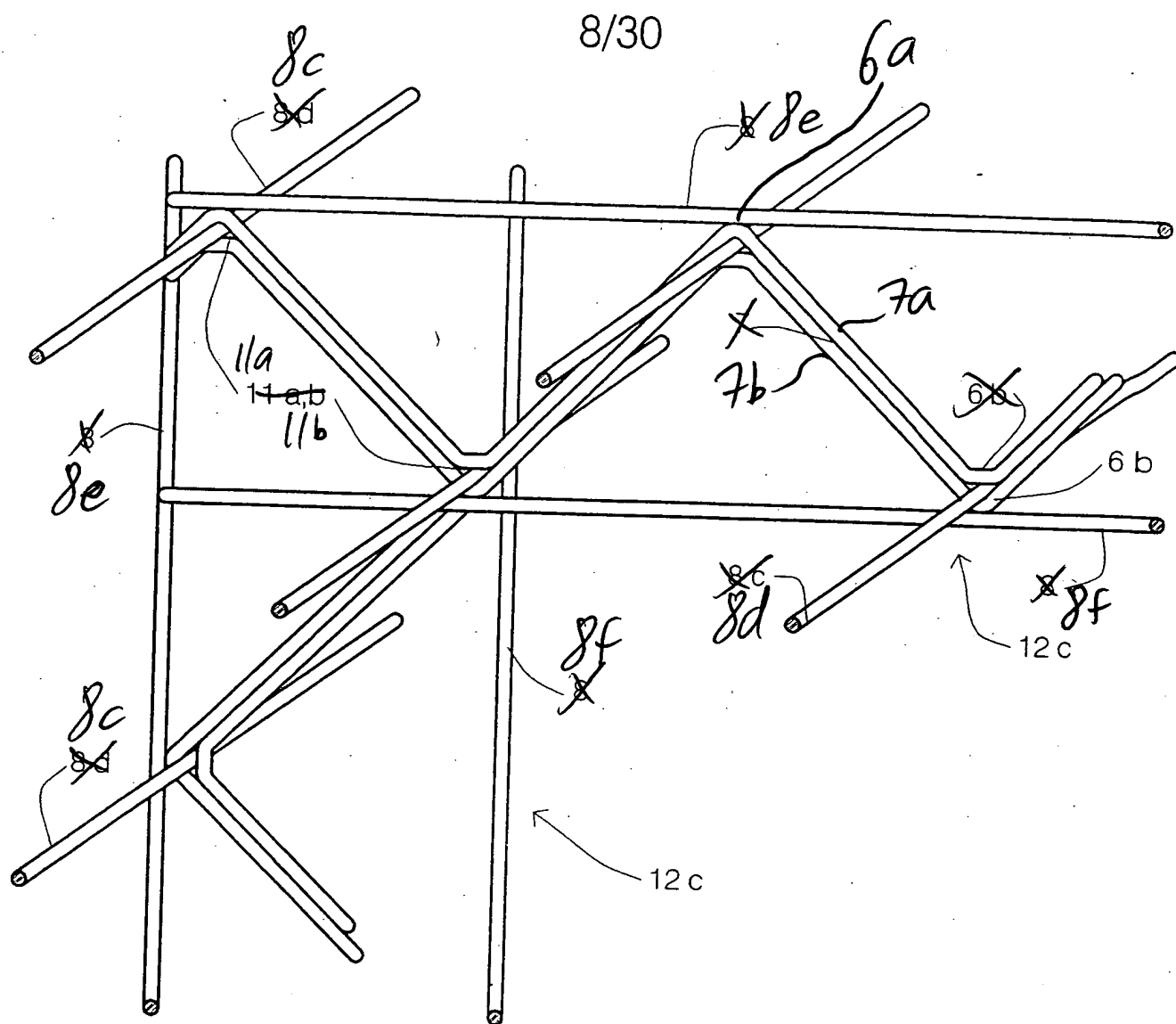


Fig. 1G

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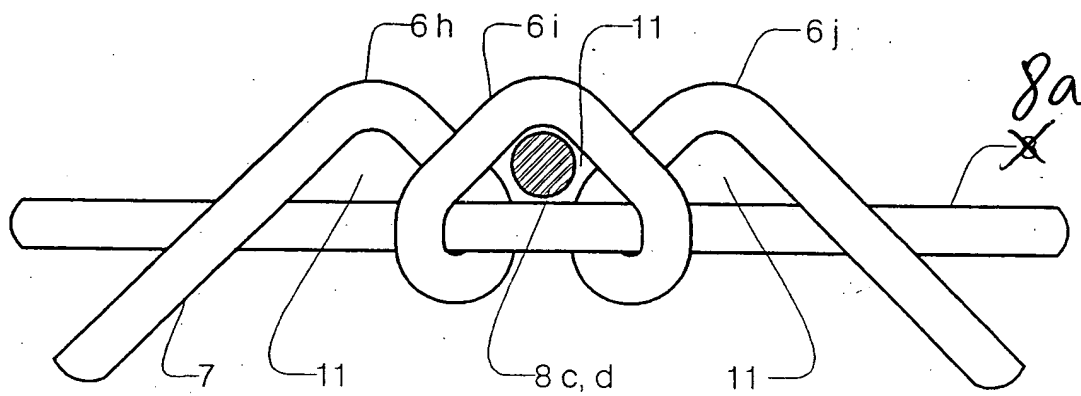


Fig. 2C

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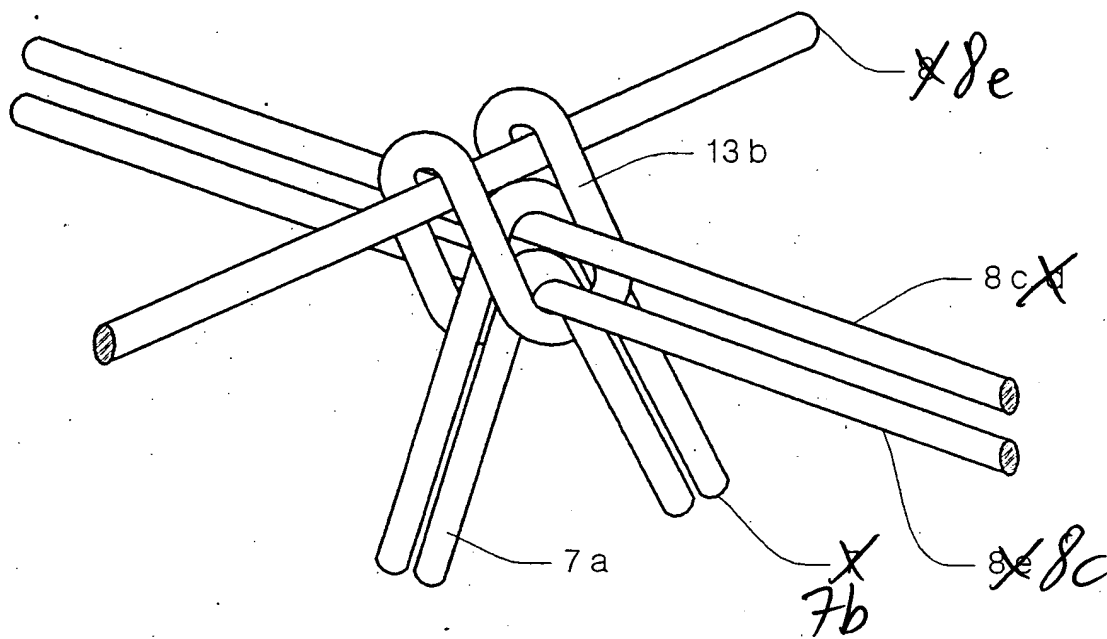


Fig. 3D

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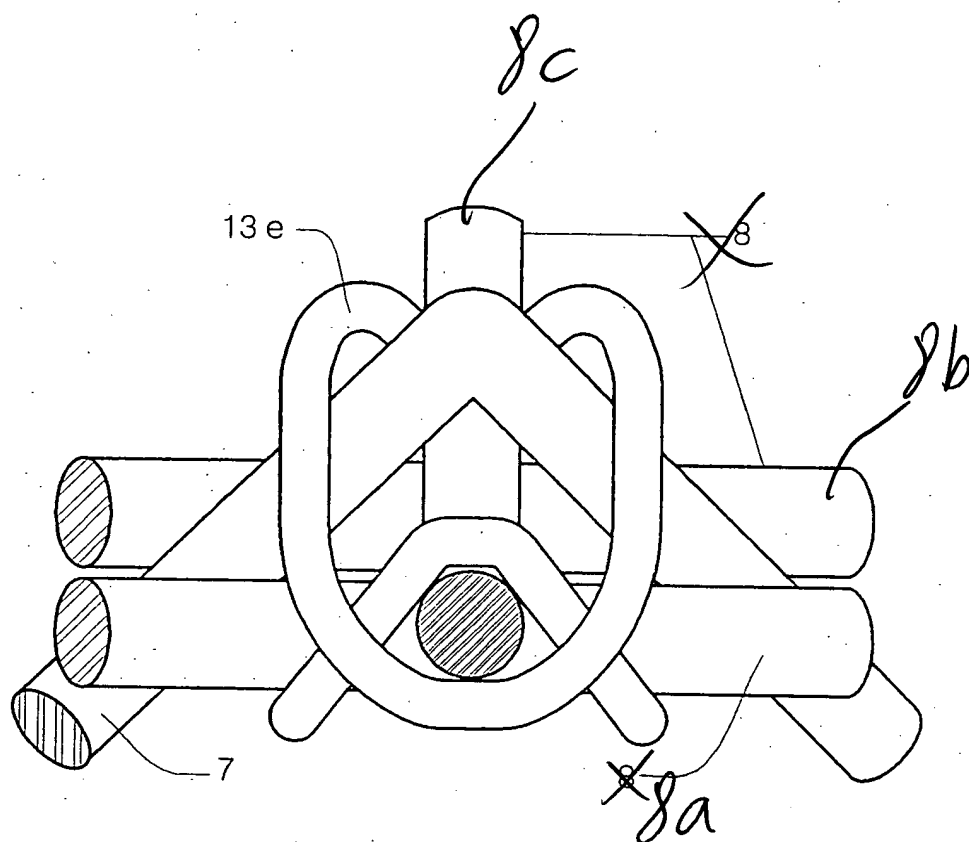


Fig. 3J

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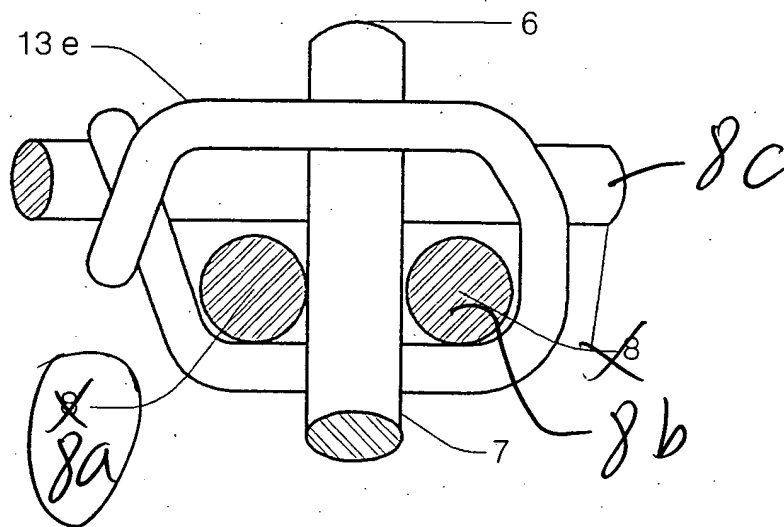


Fig. 3K

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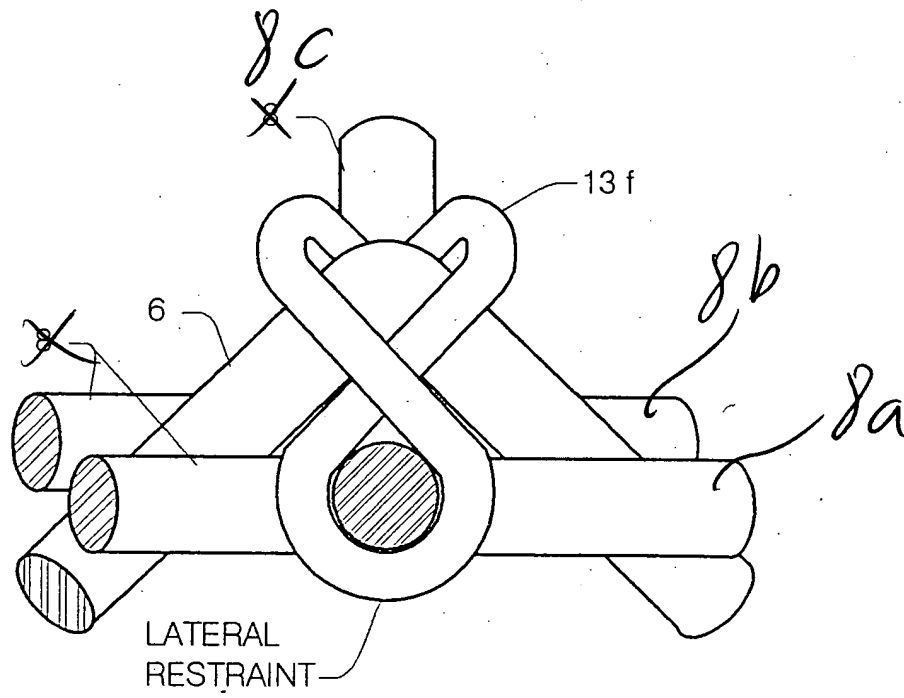


Fig. 3L

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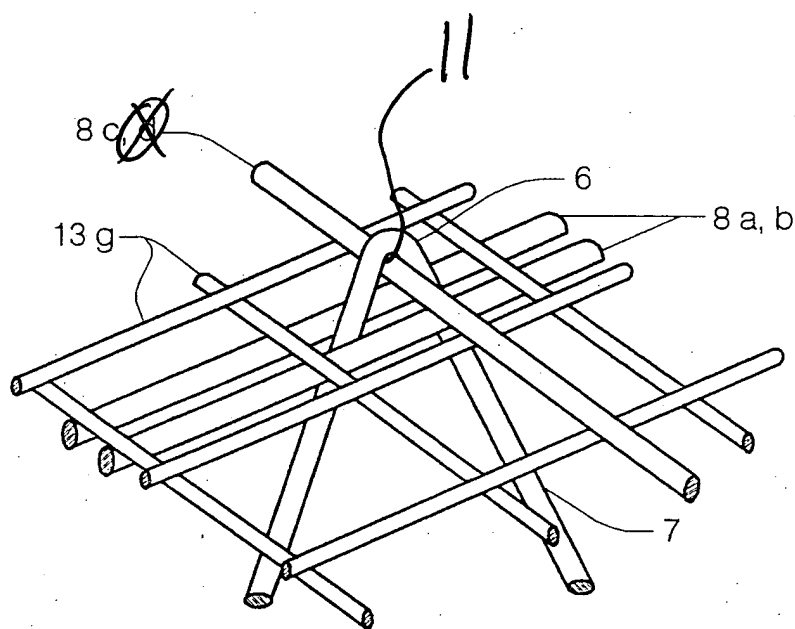


Fig. 3M

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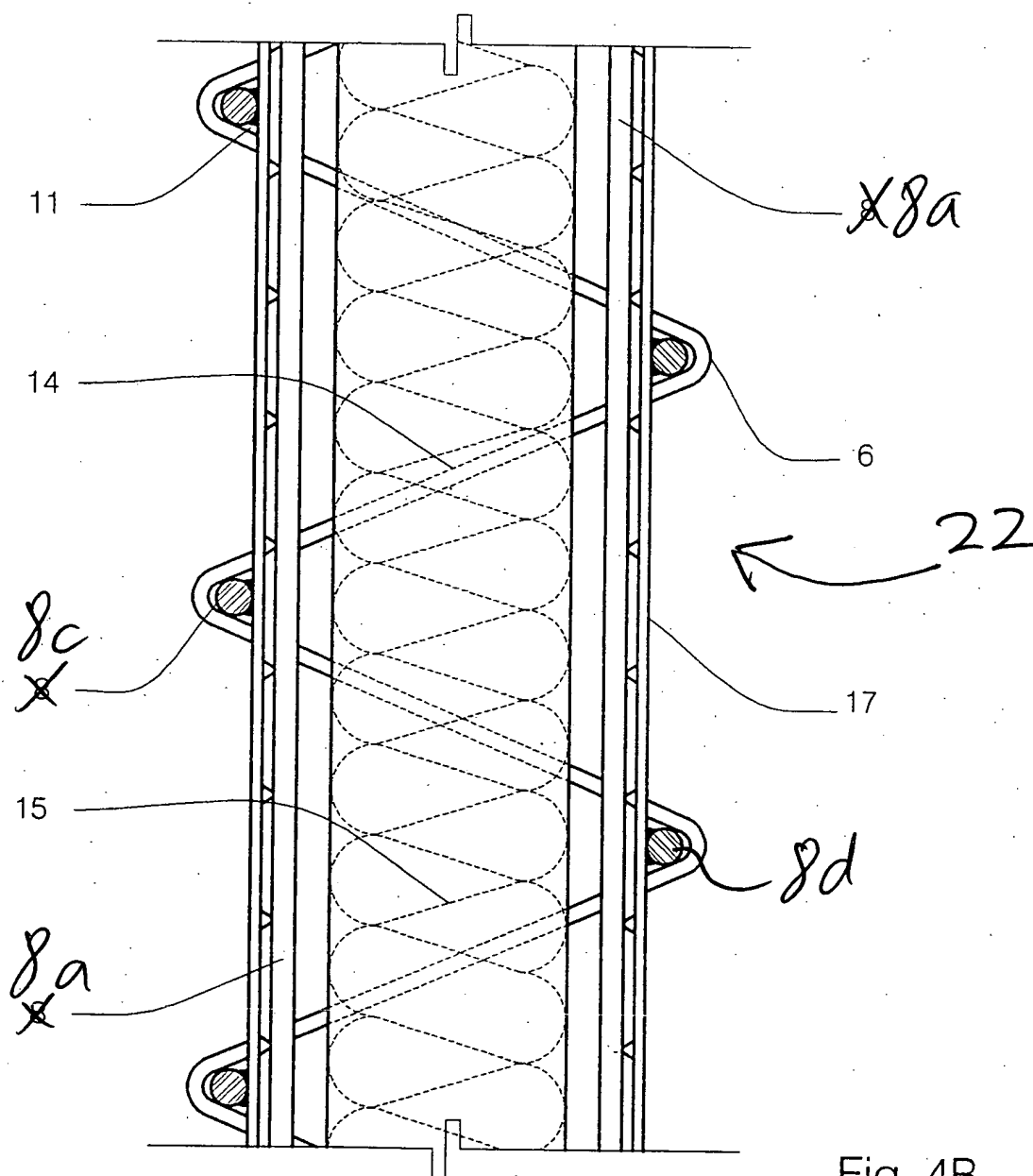


Fig. 4B

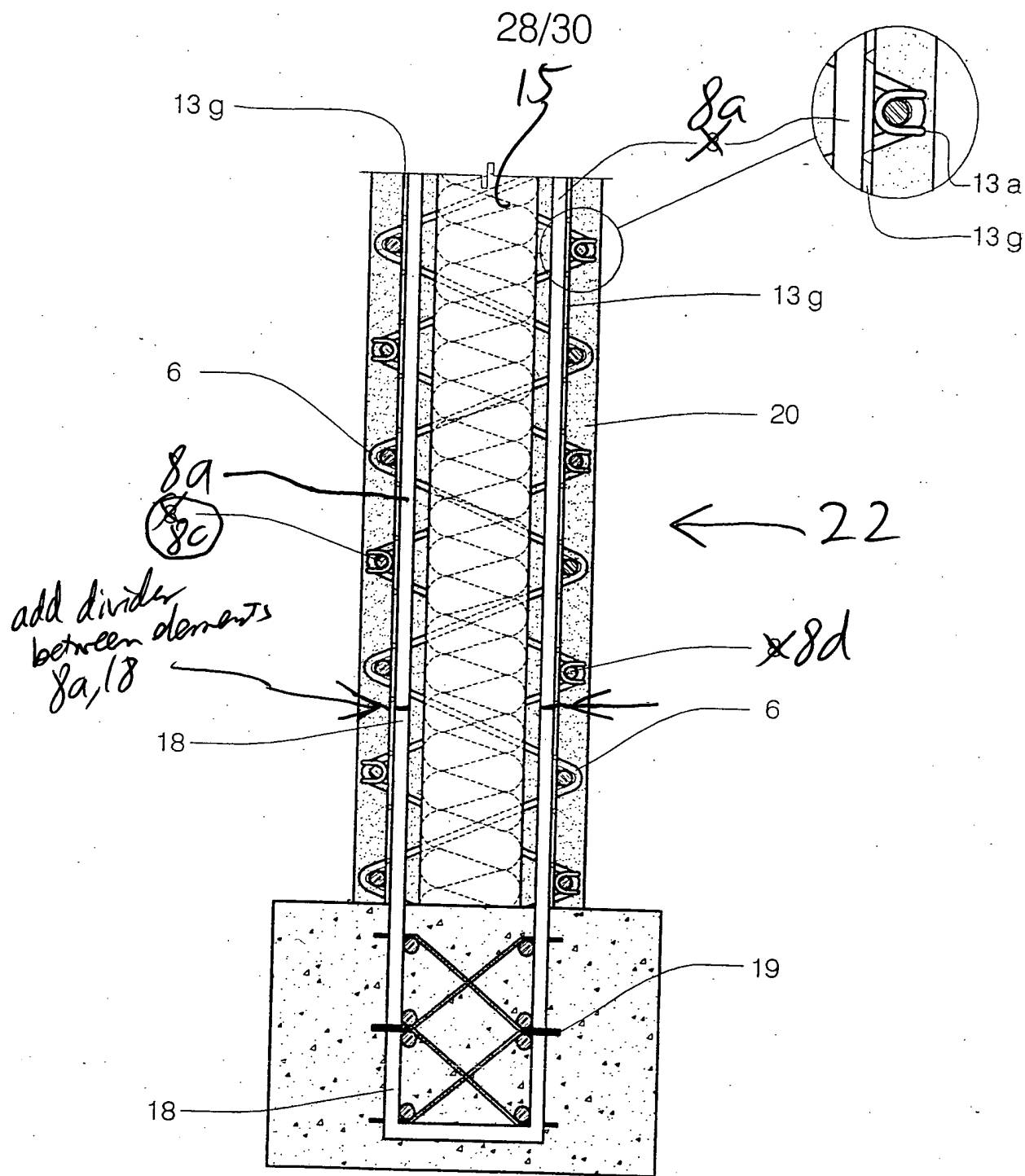


Fig. 5A